

REMARKS

The Office Action objects to claims 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23-28, 32 and 33, and rejects claims 1, 2, 4, 7-12, 14, 17-19, 22, 29-31, and 34-48.

Claims 2, 3, 12, and 13 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer, and claims 1, 4, 11, 14, 38, 39, and 47 have been amended. Accordingly, claims 1, 4-11, and 14-48 are pending. The rejections and objections are traversed or obviated below, and reconsideration of all claims is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 1, 8-11, 18, 19, 22, 30, 31, and 34-48 Under 35 U.S.C. §102(e)

The Office Action rejects claims 1, 8-11, 18, 19, 22, 30, 31, and 34-48 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent 6,857,610 issued to Conner et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Conner"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

On page 5, the Office Action indicates that claims 3 and 13 contain allowable features. Applicants amend claims 1, 38, 39, and 47 to include the features of claim 3, and amend claim 11 to incorporate the features of claim 13. Therefore, claims 1, 11, 38, 39, and 47 are patentably distinguishable from the cited reference.

Claims 8-10, 30, and 31 depend from claim 1 and include the features of claim 1. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 8-10, 30, and 31 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claims 18, 19, 22, and 34-37 depend from claim 11 and include all of the features of claim 11. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 18, 19, 22, and 34-37 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claims 41 and 42 depend from claim 38 and include all of the features of claim 38. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 41 and 42 also patentably distinguish over the cited reference.

Claims 40 and 43-46 depend from claim 39 and include all of the features of claim 38. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 40 and 43-46 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Claim 48 depends from claim 47 and includes all of the features of claim 47. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claim 48 also patentably distinguishes over the cited reference.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claims 2, 4, 7, 12, 14, and 17 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 2, 4, 7, 12, 14, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Conner in view of U.S. Patent 5,163,652 issued to King. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 2 and 12 have been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

As discussed above, Applicants amend claim 1 to include the features of claim 3, and amend claim 11 to incorporate the features of claim 13. Therefore, claims 1 and 11 are patentably distinguishable from the cited references.

Claims 4 and 7 depend from claim 1 and include the features of claim 1. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 4 and 7 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

In addition, claims 14 and 17 depend from claim 11 and include all of the features of claim 11. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 14 and 17 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Rejection of Claim 29 Under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

The Office Action rejects claims 29 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Conner in view of U.S. Patent 5, 751,548 issued to Hall et al. (hereinafter referred to as "Hall"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As discussed above, Applicants amend claim 11 to include the features of claim 13. Therefore, claim 11 is patentably distinguishable from the cited reference.

Claim 29 depends from claim 11 and include all of the features of claim 11. Therefore, for at least these reasons, claims 29 also patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Objections to Claims 3, 5, 6, 13, 15, 16, 20, 21, 23-28, 32 and 33

Claims 3 and 13 are cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. The features of claim 3 are incorporated into claim 1. Claims 5 and 6 depend from claim 1 and include the features of claim 1. Therefore, claims 5 and 6 do not depend from a rejected base claim.

In addition, the features of claim 13 are incorporated into claim 11. Claims 15, 16, 20, 21, 23-28, 32, and 33 depend from claim 11 and include all of the features of claim 11. Therefore, claims 15, 16, 20, 21, 23-28, 32, and 33 do not depend from a rejected base claim.

Accordingly, withdrawal of this objection is respectfully requested.

Summary

Claims 1, 4-11, and 14-48 are pending and are under consideration. It is respectfully submitted that none of the references taken alone or in combination disclose the present claimed invention.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

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